

Description

[PROTECTIVE PACKAGING DEVICE FOR BLAST AND FRAGMENTATION MITIGATION]

FEDERAL RESEARCH STATEMENT

[0001] [The inventions described herein may be manufactured, used and licensed by or for the U.S. Government for U.S. Government purposes.]

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0002] Although, as will become apparent, the present invention is not limited to such an application, the exemplary application that is discussed below concerns mitigation of the effects of the detonation of hand grenades. It is evident from past experience that the safe storage and handling of hand grenades present a problem in that even though grenades include a safety pin and are disarmed unless actively armed, accidental detonation of hand grenades can occur and has occurred in the past. Further, the conven-

tional packs or packaging currently used in the storage and handling of grenades is of limited effectiveness in mitigating against the blast and fragmentation that occurs when a grenade is accidentally detonated. As will be appreciated, this can be a particular hazard when hand grenades are shipped with other incompatible explosives.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0003] In accordance with the invention, there is provided a protective packaging device for energetic elements, such as hand grenades and other munitions, which possesses a number of important advantages. For example, the device of the invention reduces fragmentation , and provides for slow release of the gases formed during detonation. Further, the device decreases the hazard classification of munitions stored therein, complies with Insensitive Munitions (IM) standards, and prevents destruction of other ammunition that is transported therewith (thereby resulting in the aforementioned lower hazard classification). In addition, the device potentially provides a reduction in costs. A key advantage of the invention is that it supports safe handling of grenades and other energetic elements in the storage and transport thereof, and, as just indicated, permits the shipment of incompatible explosives, by forming

an IM barrier that is intended to prevent sympathetic detonation of other energetic elements and to assist in providing an effective response to both bullet and fragmentation impacts.

[0004] In accordance with one aspect of the invention, there is provided a protective packaging device for mitigation of blast effects and fragmentation of an energetic element when the energetic element is detonated, the device comprising at least one protective housing member in which an energetic element is received, the housing member being comprised of a mesh material for retaining fragments of the energetic element upon detonation thereof while providing controlled release through the mesh material of gases formed upon detonation of the energetic element.

[0005] In a very important implementation of the device, the at least one housing member comprises inner and outer nested housing members comprised of a mesh material and forming a protective housing assembly. The housing members are advantageously made of steel mesh although other, like materials can also be used.

[0006] Preferably, the device further comprises at least one cushioning container comprised of a cushioning material having a plurality of open compartments therein and a plural-

ity of the protective housing assemblies are provided, with each of the protective housing assemblies being received in a respective one of the compartments of the cushioning material. Advantageously, the container also includes a cover. Preferably, the at least one cushioning container comprises a plurality of stackable containers so as to enable storage and transport of a large number of energetic elements.

[0007] In another specific important implementation, the energetic element comprises a grenade, the inner and outer nested housing members are of substantially cup-shaped construction and the inner housing member is open at the top and has an inner profile substantially matching that of the grenade. Such a grenade typically includes an operating lever and, advantageously, the inner profile of the inner housing member includes a recess for accommodating the operating lever of the grenade.

[0008] Further features and advantages of the present invention will be set forth in, or apparent from, the detailed description of preferred embodiments thereof which follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0009] Figure 1 is an exploded perspective view of a protective packaging device for a hand grenade, constructed in ac-

cordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention; Figure 2 is a top plan view of the inner mesh cup of the packaging device of Figure 1; Figure 3 is a partially broken away perspective view of a container for plural protective devices corresponding to that shown in Figure 1, constructed in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention; Figure 4 is a top plan view of the container of Figure 3, with the top removed; and Figure 5 is a perspective view of two stacked containers corresponding to that shown in Figures 3 and 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] Referring to Figure 1, there is shown a pair of nested mesh cups 10 and 12 constructed in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention. In Figure 1, the cups 10 and 12 are shown in an intermediate position wherein inner cup 10 is being inserted into outer cup 12. Both cups 10 and 12 are preferably constructed of a steel mesh material which is molded or pressed into a cup or bowl-like shape as shown. Although cups 10 and 12 are preferably made of steel mesh, it will, of course, be understood that other like mesh materials can be used. Further, although the cup shape illustrated is preferred for a grenade, other shapes can be used for applications in-

volving different explosives or munitions. In an exemplary embodiment, the mesh size of the steel mesh material used to make cups 10 and 12 is 0.01 to 0.02 inches. Preferably, the mesh is a woven mesh which is compressed to form the mesh material. It is believed that such a compressed, woven mesh will relieve the pressure more rapidly than other forms of mesh material.

[0011] As shown in Figure 2, and as is also shown in Figure 3, the inner cup 10 defines a central cup-shaped compartment 10a which is open at the top and includes a specially spaced, recessed portion 10b for receiving, as illustrated in Figure 3, the operating lever L of a conventional grenade G. Outer cup 12 itself includes a similar shaped compartment (without recess 10b) in which inner cup 10 is received and which is sized such that, in use, inner cup 10 nests completely inside outer cup and the top edge surfaces of the cups 10, 12 lie flush with each other.

[0012] Referring to Figures 3 and 4, in an exemplary, non-limiting embodiment, three sets of nested cups 10, 12 are disposed in reciprocally shaped, laterally spaced receiving compartments or recesses in a cushioning material or cushion 14 which itself is received in an outer container or housing 16. A cover 18, which may be constructed in part,

or as a whole, of a mesh material similar to that of cups 10, 12, is fitted on container 16 so as to cover the tops of nested cups 10 and 12. As indicated at the left side of Figure 3, and was mentioned above, a grenade G is shown as being received in the central cup-shaped compartment 10a in one of the three sets of nested cups 10, 12, with the operating lever L of the grenade G being received in recessed portion 10b of compartment 10a.

[0013] As shown in Figure 5, two (or more) containers 16 with covers 18 can be stacked so that any number of grenades or other munitions can be protectively housed and stored.

[0014] As was indicated above, the blast/fragmentation mitigation pack or packaging device of the invention provides a number of important advantages over prior munition handling approaches. For example, the nested mesh cups reduce fragmentation, decrease hazard classification, enable compliance with insensitive munitions restrictions, prevent the destruction of other ammunition from the detonation reaction of a grenade packaged thereby, and provide potential cost reductions. The nested mesh cups of the invention enable safe handling of grenades in both storage and transport modes and allow shipment of protected grenades with otherwise incompatible explosives.

As indicated above, the nested mesh cups are also adaptable for use in storing and transporting of other high explosives with other ammunition of a lower hazard classification.

[0015] In preliminary testing with containers with and without nested mesh cups corresponding to cups 10, 12, a grenade in a container without the mesh cups dismantled the container with grenade fragments piercing through the container, whereas a grenade in a container and received in the mesh cups dismantled the container without any fragments piercing through the container.

[0016] Although the invention has been described above in relation to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that variations and modifications can be effected in these preferred embodiments without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention.